

2.4 Myths and Legends in Ancient Egypt



Myths and Legends

- ♦ According to Ancient Egyptian mythology, the earth was created when a primeval hill emerged from the flood waters of the Nile
- ♦ Atum, the “Creator-God” simply emerged standing on the hill that rose from the water.
- ♦ He was “the perfect one” and self-begotten



Myths and Legends

- Atum then separated the sky from the earth
- Geb became the God of the earth
- Nut became God of the Sky



Geb

Myths and Legends

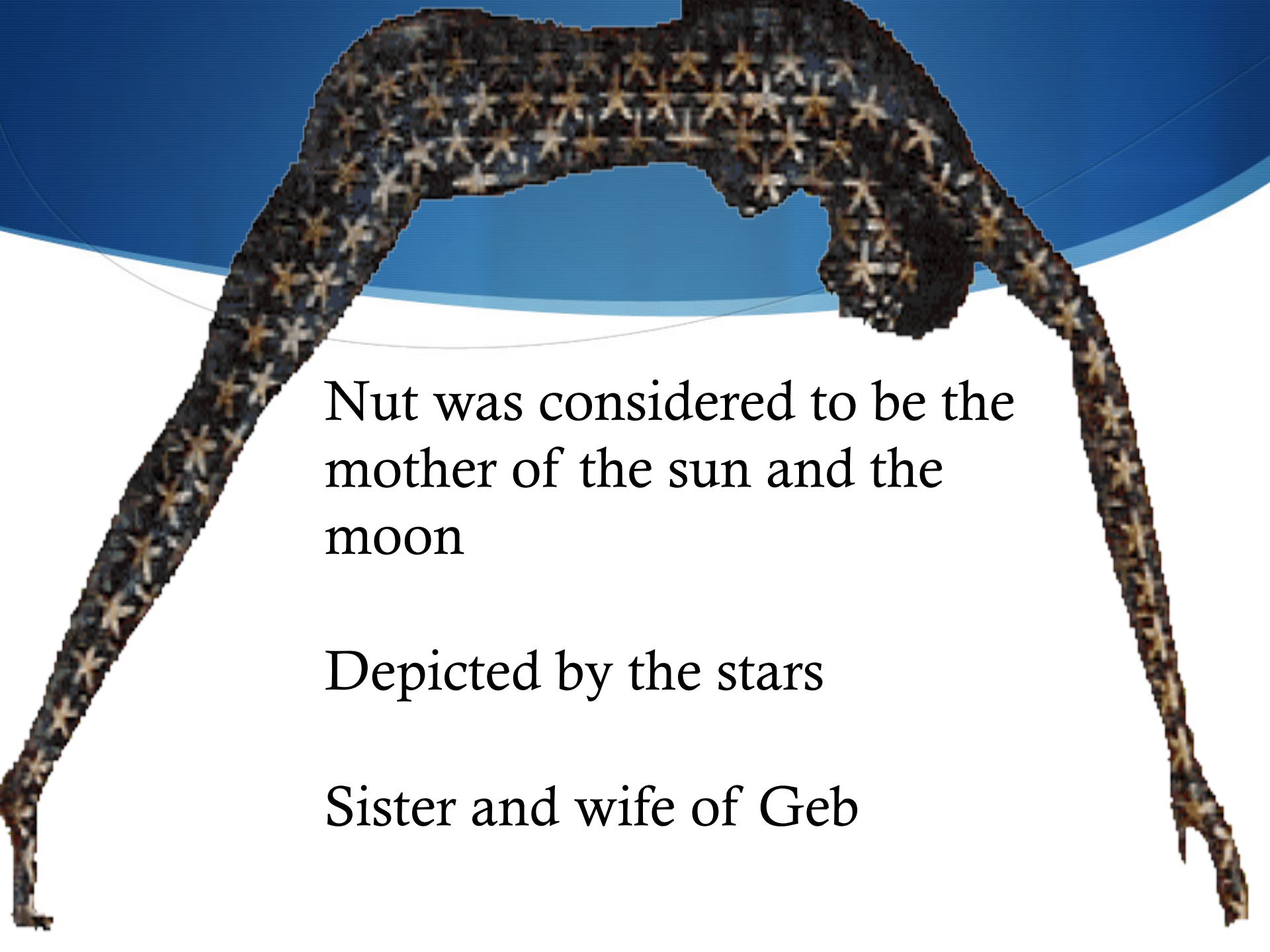
- ◆ Geb is depicted below as a vegetation-god he was shown with green patches or plants on his body
- ◆ As the earth, he is often seen lying beneath Nut, leaning on one elbow, with a knee bent toward the sky, this is a representation of the mountains and valleys of the earth





◆ Nut “God of the Sky”

◆ Nut is shown stretching from horizon to horizon



Nut was considered to be the
mother of the sun and the
moon

Depicted by the stars

Sister and wife of Geb



Children of Nut and Geb

Osirus

Osirus

God of the afterlife.



The symbol of resurrection and eternal life.

Provider of fertility and prosperity to the living.

Children of Nut and Geb

Osirus

Depicted by the color green
representing rebirth

Married Isis and had a son named
Horus

Story about the birth of Horus



Children of Nut and Geb

Osirus

Osirus was Pharaoh and he was killed by his brother Set and the pieces of his body were spread all over Egypt

Isis fashioned a golden phallus, and briefly brought Osiris back to life by use of a spell that she learned from her father



Children of Nut and Geb

Osirus

This spell gave her time to become pregnant by Osiris before he again died.

Isis later gave birth to Horus



Children of Nut and Geb

Isis



Isis is the Goddess
of motherhood,
magic and fertility

Sister and wife to
Osirus



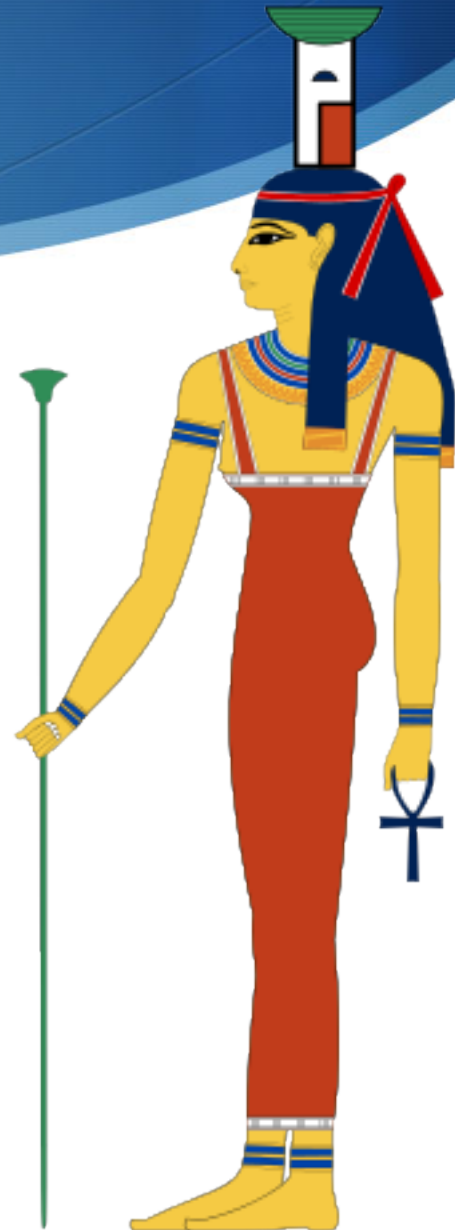
Children of Nut and Geb



Set is the God of desert, storms and darkness

Nephthys is the Goddess of the house

Brother and sister, also husband and wife



Children of Nut and Geb

- ◆ This group of deities formed the first unit in the divine hierarchal Gods

The Afterlife

- 💧 The Egyptians saw the afterlife as a duplication of the best moments on earth
- 💧 Believed in the afterlife they would be engaged in the activities they liked such as hunting, fishing and feasting

The Afterlife

- 💧 Death was not an end, but a beginning
- 💧 Preparation for the afterlife varied considerably depending on whether the individual was royal, noble, or a peasant
- 💧 For all however, there were two basic requirements:

The Afterlife

1.

The body must be preserved in a lifelike form



The Afterlife

2.

The deceased must be provided with the items necessary for the afterlife



Egyptian Burial Practices

- ◆ The earliest people to settle in the Nile Valley buried their dead in pit-graves dug in the hot sands in the desert.
- ◆ Rainless climate and the dryness of the desert caused a natural process of desiccation whereby the body fluids were absorbed by the sand

Egyptian Burial Practices

- 💧 As burials became more elaborate, the body was placed then in a lined tomb
- 💧 Problem.....the bodies were decomposing
- 💧 As a consequence the Egyptians came up with the idea of Mummification

An Egyptian Funeral

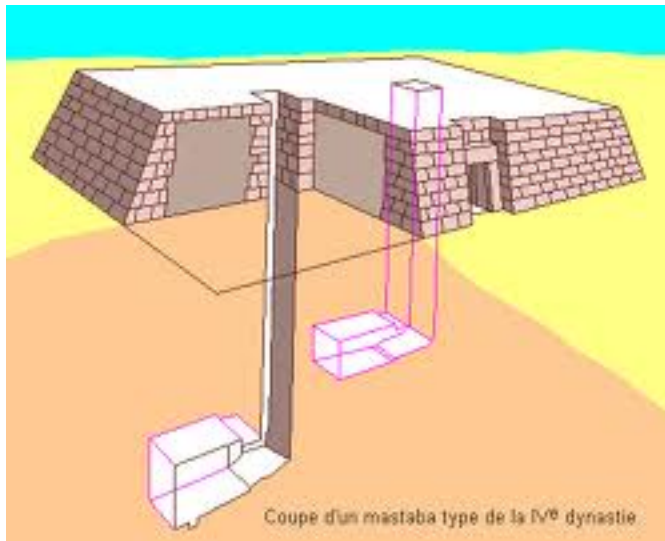
- ◆ Lengthy and elaborate affairs
- ◆ Procession in where the body would be brought to the embalmers
- ◆ Once mummification was completed, the body would be returned to the family, then brought to the tomb

An Egyptian Funeral

- 💧 Three sledges in the procession to the tomb
- 💧 The pyramid evolved to bury the royalty
- 💧 Likely a link to creation story of ancient Egyptians

An Egyptian Funeral

- ◆ The earliest pyramids were mastabas (oblong tombs) stacked one on top of the other

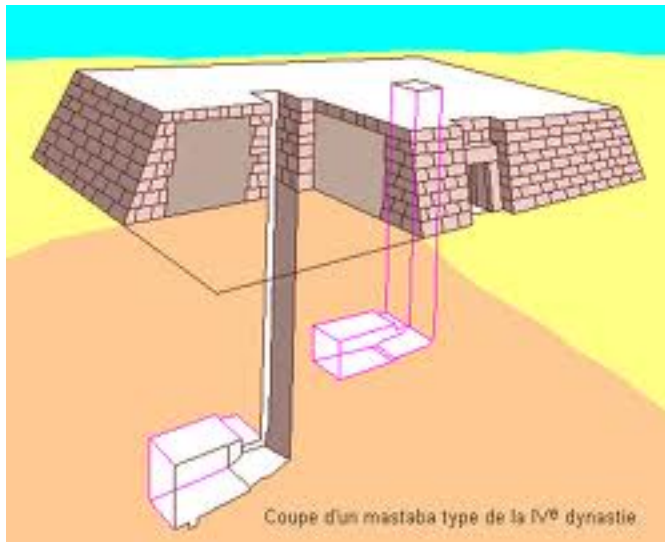


An Egyptian Funeral

- ◆ The burial chamber of the king remained underground

By the time of the New Kingdom the Pharaohs had come to realize that building pyramids were a mistake

Grave robbers



An Egyptian Funeral

- 💧 In hopes of eternal security the Pharaohs in the New Kingdom chose two quiet, hidden valleys they believed would be safe from the robbers

